

Challenges and Suggestions for Enhancing Inter-Agency Contingency Planning

Report of the 1st Global Consultation
Of Contingency Planners in Humanitarian Agencies



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning hosted the first ever global consultation of contingency planners from humanitarian agencies in Geneva on 2-4 July 2007. The consultation brought together some 67 participants from 22 agencies. The overall objective of the consultation was to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response through contingency planning and preparedness. The consultation was intended as a first professional exchange between peers, and provided opportunity for participants to exchange experiences, best practices and lessons learned, as well as to provide specific input to the IASC Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines currently under revision.

The full report seeks to document the rich discussions that took place, both as a record for participants but also as a reference for those around the world that regularly work on these complex issues. It also seeks to highlight some areas of emerging consensus on which actions can be taken to improve preparedness and contingency planning so that appropriate and timely humanitarian assistance and protection can be provided to those in need. Listed below are key suggestions offered by participants for strengthening preparedness and contingency planning.

1. The Right Goals and Focus in Contingency Planning

- Encourage understanding of preparedness and contingency planning as tools and processes for change – helping to define needs, address potential problems, clarify roles, improve coordination, and generate practical action, not simply as the production of a document or plan.
- Give greater attention to using the process of contingency planning to enhance the quality of humanitarian assistance.
- Include in contingency planning a focus on building capacities of participating institutions and partners and sustainable processes.

2. Improving the Consistency of Preparedness and Contingency Planning

- Emphasise that preparedness and contingency planning processes will only be successful if there is senior management buy-in and oversight of the process;
- Encourage establishment of permanent 'preparedness and contingency planning task forces' of senior programme level staff from agencies within all country teams¹.

¹ The term Country Team is understood in this report to include both UN agencies and international NGOs. It should be noted that a change to 'humanitarian country team' was suggested during the consultation to reflect such broader participation.

- Further institutionalize preparedness and contingency planning through system-wide advocacy and training; issuance of a high-level directive, perhaps from the IASC principals, on the need for regular preparedness and contingency planning was suggested.
- Strengthen accountabilities for preparedness and contingency planning by clarifying accountabilities of agencies, country teams as well as headquarter and regional supportive structures; include accountabilities for preparedness and contingency planning in staff terms of reference and performance appraisal forms; reaffirm Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator accountabilities for preparedness and contingency planning as well as those of the members of the country team.
- Strengthen oversight and quality assurance of inter-agency preparedness and contingency planning efforts. Suggestions included the establishment of a 'peer review network'; a 'preparedness audit' to assess strengths and identify gaps; encourage more robust self-assessment; encourage all country teams to undertake simulations/exercises.
- Develop further guidance and training tools to support agency and country efforts in preparedness and contingency planning; highlighted as a priority.

3. Improving Contingency Planning Processes

- Integrate contingency planning into on-going planning processes, e.g. Common Country Assessment-UN Development Assistance Framework (CCA-UNDAFs) and Common Assessment Processes (CAPs)
- Develop enhanced toolkits to support contingency planning training and simulation, ensuring availability of information about existing tools.
- Develop a checklist of actions that country teams are recommended to do in preparation for a contingency planning exercise.

4. Facilitation and Support of Contingency Planning

- Adopt the terminology of 'contingency planners' as referring to agencies and staff in-country, and 'contingency planning facilitators' as the external technical support provided to country teams.
- Encourage multi-agency technical support to inter-agency contingency planning initiatives, rather than the support being provided by a single agency or body.
- Develop standard operating procedures on how a Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator and country team can request preparedness and contingency planning support.
- Strengthen capacities to provide contingency planning support to country offices by establishing rosters of contingency planning facilitators at regional and global levels.

- Recognize, support and enhance regional inter-agency working groups dedicated to supporting country team preparedness and contingency planning efforts.
- Provide greater clarity on the role of global inter-agency support structures for preparedness and contingency planning.

5. Qualifications for Humanitarian Contingency Planners

- Establish norms or suggested minimum qualifications for contingency planners/facilitators supported by efforts to help identify the appropriate persons and help candidates reach the desired competencies.

6. Form and Content of Contingency Plans

- Encourage contingency planning with consideration of generic preparedness for multiple hazards, rather than separate plans for each hazard.
- Agree on the level of detail needed in planning. In general, keep inter-agency contingency plans at a strategic level. Avoiding 'over-planning' or dumping all details into the plan.
- Keep contingency plans as simple and brief as possible, but determine level of detail required to achieve the implementation of the required preparedness actions, response capacities and to resolve anticipated problems.
- Define as an essential aspect of contingency planning an agreed 'level of preparedness' for agencies/organizations and the country team, which can be adjusted as threat levels vary.
- Ensure more robust and nuanced analysis to ensure that information is available on the potential impact of humanitarian crises on specific populations.

7. Linkage between Planning and Emergency Response

- Assess the decision-making systems and make recommendations for strengthening the linkage between information and action in preparedness and contingency planning.
- Do not use lack of funds as an excuse for not doing preparedness and contingency planning.
- Encourage greater allocation and prioritization of resources for preparedness and contingency planning.
- Find improved mechanisms for 'triggering' contingency planning and preparedness, including use of such tools as the IASC Early Warning –Early Action report.

8. Linkages with National Governments

- Ensure that the establishment of appropriate linkages with national systems are always a critical component of the inter-agency contingency planning processes.

9. Humanitarian Reform and the Cluster Approach

- See the contingency planning process as a means to putting in place appropriate cluster coordination arrangements prior to emergencies.
- Ensure that country teams have training on the cluster approach prior to their undertaking inter-agency contingency planning exercises that will integrate the cluster approach.
- Ensure that contingency planning facilitators are fully conversant with the general principles of the cluster approach as well as the latest operational guidance.

10. Revision of the IASC Contingency Planning Guidelines

- Suggestions offered to the Drafting Group in the consultation for how the draft inter-agency contingency planning guidelines might be strengthened are included in full report.
- It was suggested that a toolbox be developed to accompany the revised IASC Contingency Planning Guidelines when completed.

11. Potential new tools of relevance to early warning, preparedness and contingency planning

- Undertake an inter-agency assessment and establish agreement on the use of new common information platforms, like GoogleEarth, to facilitate enhanced planning.
- Further investigation and assessment of the inter-agency contingency planning system being developed by the country team in El Salvador to determine its potential adoption as a model.

Summary and Conclusions: The Way Forward

- Consider the establishment of an 'association of humanitarian contingency planners' as a forum for continued interaction and building of a professional cadre of humanitarian contingency planners, who can be used to facilitate field-based planning processes.
- Consider the establishment of a 'community of practice' supported by a website and e-forum for sharing best practices, posting problems and furthering discussions.
- Give priority to the creation of more common tools, affirmed throughout the consultation.

The IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning will review all of the suggestions made by participants in the course of the consultation and propose a prioritized plan of action for their implementation.

PREFACE

Preparedness and contingency planning are two of the most critical elements of emergency management. The aim of these processes is to ensure that humanitarian needs are met in an appropriate, effective, timely and efficient manner. The seriousness of preparedness and contingency planning can hardly be overstated for they concern efforts to preserve people's lives, well-being and rights.

Contingency planning involves anticipating potential humanitarian consequences of specific threats and the likely responses that will be required in situations which have not fully evolved. It involves planning in a context of considerable uncertainty, anticipating problems that may arise and attempting to find solutions through preparatory actions. Preparedness and contingency planning requires a broad understanding of specific threats and situations, how systems and responders will function, and what actions are required to enhance the quality and timeliness of response. It involves working with a broad array of people and organizations to bring about concerted action and change - often in the face of resistance. It is unquestionably one of the most serious, fascinating and challenging responsibilities in the humanitarian field.

As a part of ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of inter-agency preparedness and contingency planning, the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning proposed a consultation to bring together, for the first time, contingency planners from a range of humanitarian organizations.

The only criterion for participation in the consultation was that participants hold responsibilities for preparedness and contingency planning for humanitarian programmes in whatever agency they worked. This gathering allowed for exchange of experience and vigorous debate on some of the thorny issues that regularly confront those engaged in contingency planning processes. There was frank dialogue on making inter-agency processes more effective and how support from regional and global levels could be more effectively deployed.

While the purpose of the consultation was not to generate a programme of action, throughout the three days consensus emerged on specific actions that could be taken to enhance preparedness and contingency planning. This report seeks to document the rich discussions that took place, both as a record for participants but also as a reference for those around the world that regularly work on these complex issues. It also seeks to highlight some areas of emerging consensus on which actions can be taken to improve preparedness and contingency planning so that

appropriate and timely humanitarian assistance and protection can be provided to those in need.

On behalf of the sub-working group we would like to thank all participants for the wealth of experience that they brought to the consultation as well as for the frank debate on how to improve our collective action. I would also like to recognize Louise Gentzel (UNICEF) for her excellent work in supporting the organization of the meeting, and Iride Cessacci (WFP) and Christophe Schmactel (OCHA) for their superb work in recording the deliberations.

Everett M. Ressler (UNICEF), Co-Chair
Amy Horton (WFP), Co-Chair a.i.

IASC Sub-Working Group on
Preparedness and Contingency Planning

INTRODUCTION

The 1st Global Consultation of Contingency Planners, hosted by the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning², was held 2-4 July 2007, at Chateau de Penthes, Geneva (for the full agenda, see Annex A.) Some 67 persons participated, from 22 agencies and organizations; roughly half coming from regional and field offices (for the full list of participants, see Annex B.)

The over-arching goal of the consultation was to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response through inter-agency contingency planning and preparedness. The consultation aimed to promote better understanding of key issues, to foster the sharing of ideas and experience, to enhance professional linkages, to foster discussion on the improvement of the revised Inter-agency Contingency Planning Guidelines (currently in draft form), and to encourage consideration of ways in which the quality of contingency planning and preparedness might be enhanced.

The deliberations opened with an overview of concepts, practice and challenges in contingency planning. A 'quick wins' exercise captured initial ideas as to actions that might be taken that would enhance inter-agency contingency planning efforts. During the first day, 20 participants provided rich summaries of key lessons learned and challenges faced in their experience of contingency planning. Discussions during the second day focused on thematic issues – the implications of Humanitarian Reform on inter-agency contingency planning; collaboration on inter-agency contingency planning at country, regional and headquarters levels; the linkage between contingency planning and response; and discussion of the revised draft of the IASC Contingency Planning Guidelines. The second day ended with a presentation of several new tools being used by various agencies. The last morning of the consultation was dedicated to discussion of the need for enhancing the competencies of contingency planners in the humanitarian system, and of what follow-up actions would be taken.

Participants focused both on what worked well and challenges that continue to be faced, recognizing that the search for ways to improve effectiveness continues. While general agreement existed on many key points, divergent opinions existed on others.

² The IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning is a voluntary association of persons accountable for early warning, preparedness and contingency planning within IASC member agencies. It currently includes an early warning group and a drafting group working on revision of the inter-agency contingency planning guidelines.

The purpose of this report is two-fold. First to document the rich discussions in an effort to capture the current state of thinking and practice in contingency planning, both for participants but also other practitioners that were not able to attend. Secondly, to highlight the emerging consensus on areas where action is required.

Part I of this report sets out the background and context for discussion as outlined in the two opening presentations of the consultation. **Part II** provides a synthesis of the discussions over the two and half days.

PART I: INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEWS

Context

The need for effective humanitarian preparedness and response is reflected in the fact that each year international assistance is provided in some 400 emergencies around the world. The scale and intensity of these emergencies is increasing. Emergencies occur in almost every country, involve a wide variety of threats and occur on different scales of magnitude. Accordingly, contingency planning must include consideration of all types of emergencies (i.e. conflicts, displacements, natural disasters, health emergencies, etc) and must work to ensure that appropriate readiness is in place to respond to very small, localized emergency situations, moderate to severe crises, and the infrequent but catastrophic disasters which require global mobilization.

"Some 400 emergencies are occurring each year in which some level of international assistance is provided, and the scale and intensity of these emergencies is increasing."

The need to strengthen current efforts is also rooted in the recognition that the standards for humanitarian preparedness and response continue to increase. Ad hoc, unstructured, ineffectual emergency response is ever more unacceptable; good intent is not enough. Some key operational agencies have substantially enhanced their preparedness and response capacities over the past several years—improving early warning systems, institutionalizing preparedness planning, strengthening training programmes and introducing exercises and simulations—but these developments remain uneven across agencies and organizations. Continued emphasis on preparedness and contingency planning remains essential.

Member agencies of the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning began working together on inter-agency contingency planning in 2001 in the belief that professional collaboration would enhance both individual agency activities and the combined effort. While there is certainly need for further improvements, many positive developments have occurred over the past several years. Since the introduction of the IASC Inter-agency Contingency Planning Guidelines in 2002, for example, the practice of inter-agency contingency planning globally has substantially increased (e.g. more than 250 inter-agency contingency plans are now on record), the number of persons with dedicated responsibilities for preparedness and contingency planning is considerably greater, and regional and global support mechanisms are now in place (even if informal and nascent). Current

humanitarian reform efforts offer new opportunities through which the effectiveness of collective efforts can be enhanced further resulting in better predictability, coherence, coordination and professionalism.

While preparedness and contingency planning continue to be recognized as critical to achieving more effective humanitarian response, many challenges to maximizing the contribution of these processes remain. For example, preparedness and contingency planning is sometimes resisted, undertaken in ways that bring minimal results, may not lead to the appropriate enhancing of capacities, or address key operational or strategic challenges. Continued exploration of how to make contingency planning and preparedness more effective is essential.

Opening presentations

Richard Choularton (FEWSNET) provided a summary of observations and lessons learned from his recent review of the concept and practice of contingency planning (*Contingency Planning and Humanitarian Action – A Review of Practice*, ODI Humanitarian Practice Network, March 2007).

On this basis of this review, he presented the following observations and recommendations for improving contingency planning processes:

- Senior managers and decision-makers must lead contingency planning processes for them to be effective; contingency planning without support and engagement of senior managements typically has limited impact.
- The process of contingency planning is best understood as a tool for maintaining and improving coordination, not simply a task to produce a document.
- Most contingency planning process should be focused on improving preparedness through regular, on-going (e.g. annual) planning processes.
- The right level of detail in contingency planning is critical – detailed scenario-based planning when broad preparedness is needed is not constructive. Nor is it sufficient to undertake general preparedness planning in the face of a specific and acute threat.
- Contingency planning processes are improved by enhancing the linkage between early warning, assessment and contingency planning, particularly at country level.

- Contingency planning and response capacities are improved by increasing the use of exercises and simulations to test planning and build capacities.

The following recommendations were offered for improving contingency plans:

- While scenario development can be useful in structuring the consideration of potential developments, it is important to move beyond the simplistic use of scenarios in contingency planning, and find ways to more effectively use such projections.
- Inter-agency contingency planning should focus on the minimum set of common elements required to anchor the inter-agency process and focus on common objectives and key issues for collaboration. The 'consolidation trap', in which everything is loaded in the contingency plan, should be avoided.
- Effective inter-agency contingency plans should be rooted in an assessment of humanitarian needs as well as an assessment of response capacities. Contingency planning will be more constructive if it focuses on ways to address 'gaps' (the difference between needs and existing capacities to meet those needs) than planning based solely on existing capacities.

Two suggestions were offered for improving the quality of humanitarian action through contingency planning.

- Incorporate the lessons of previous crises into contingency planning; at the end of each emergency, review lessons learned and upgrade planning.
- Contingency planning should be used to improve the appropriateness and quality of humanitarian action. At present far too little attention is being given to improving the quality of assistance.

"In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."
President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1980-1969)

"Learn to see in another's calamity the ills which you should avoid."
Publilius Syrus 42 B.C.

"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work."
Peter Drucker (1909 – 2005)

"We must ask how we do contingency planning "well," not simply how we do it."

Everett Ressler highlighted five trends drawn from lessons learned in contingency planning and a review of the academic literature:

- Ad hoc and unstructured emergency response is increasingly unacceptable. Agencies responding to emergencies are expected to be prepared and to respond in a timely and effective manner.
- Agency/organization-specific preparedness continues to be very uneven with some organizations developing active preparedness and strong response capacities while others remain weak. Overall, however, key operational agencies have substantially enhanced their preparedness and response capacities in the past several years--early warning systems have been established, preparedness planning and training have been institutionalized and simulations/exercises introduced.
- The practice of inter-agency contingency planning has substantially increased. When the Sub-Working Group began reviewing the practice of inter-agency contingency planning in 2001, only 20 or so inter-agency contingency plans were identified; currently more than 250 are on record.
- An increasing number of agencies within the humanitarian community are enhancing their capacities to undertake and support contingency planning. While building these capacities is constructive, improving collaboration between organizations to ensure coherence and effectiveness is also required.
- A critical challenge for inter-agency contingency planning efforts is how to address the increasing number of actors, many outside the Inter-Agency Standing Committee framework, that seek to provide some form of assistance in emergency situations - agencies, governments, civil society groups, private enterprises, military organizations.

These trends suggest the following implications for contingency planning:

- The occurrence of emergencies and humanitarian response in virtually all countries reaffirms that contingency planning should be a necessary requirement for every country team.
- Consideration of the scale of potential threats and impacts is important to contingency planning as substantially different preparedness and response mechanisms are reflected; responding to the small emergency is substantially different from the catastrophic emergency.
- On the other hand, planning on the basis of a 'multi-hazard approach' while at the same time increasingly improving the

understanding and the unique preparedness and response actions required for each distinct type of emergency (e.g. floods, drought, conflict, environmental disaster, health emergencies) is a challenge remains to be the right balance in contingency planning.

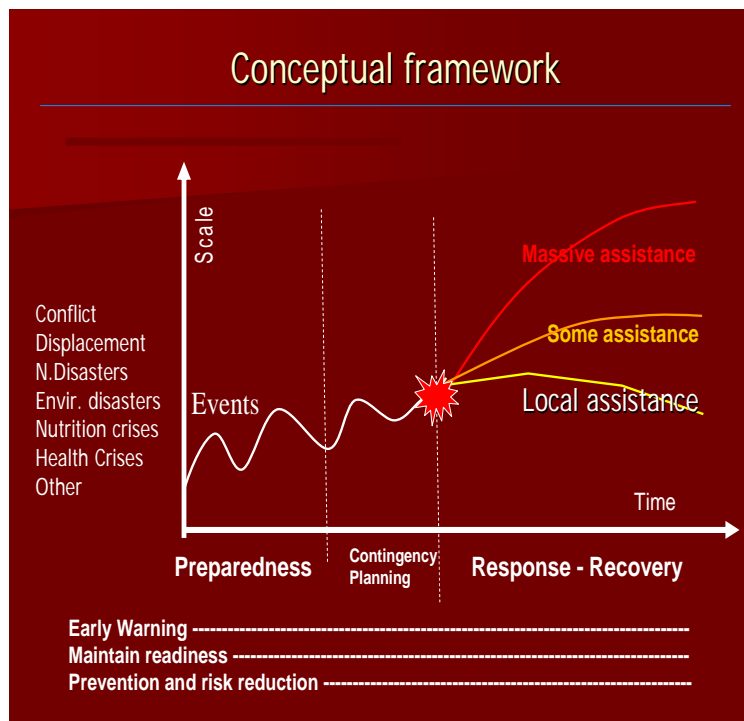
Academic research on contingency planning and disaster management³ highlight the following issues:

- The focus should be on planning, not the production of a document.
- The difference between small and large emergencies is not simply one of scale but of substantial differences in response mechanisms and actions.
- Multi-hazard or generic preparedness planning is generally more effective than a plethora of individual plans for each type of emergency.
- A decentralized, local coordination/management model is likely to be more effective than top down, 'command and control' model.
- Contingency plans which define general principles are more likely to be useful than those that focus on specific details.
- Plans are more likely to be accurate if based on actions 'likely' to be taken by people and agencies/organizations rather than how they ideally 'should' act.
- Plan with others, vertically and horizontally.
- Strive to anticipate problems and find options for dealing with them.
- Be careful of myths and misconceptions about human and organizational behaviour.
- Recognize that emergency planning and emergency management are separate processes.
- Build research into the planning process.

To set the stage for discussions in the workshop, a basic conceptual framework was offered and ten questions were offered for consideration:

³ "Research Based Criteria for Evaluating Disaster Planning and Managing," E.L. Quarantelli, Disaster Research Center, 1997

1. Do we have the right balance between the multi-hazard approach and planning for specific emergencies?
2. Do we have the right leadership and facilitating mechanisms for supporting inter-agency contingency planning?
3. Can we improve coherence between the various parties currently supporting preparedness and contingency planning (e.g. the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Teams (UNDAC), agencies, regional mechanisms, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), clusters, pandemic preparedness, business continuity, etc.)?
4. Are we using the right planning processes in inter-agency contingency planning?
5. Are we focusing on the right level of emergencies and do we have the right participants in the planning process?
6. Are we generating the right level of readiness, by what standards?
7. Do we have the appropriate linkage between planning and response?
8. Do we have the effective linkages with national systems?
9. Should standards/norms be considered for humanitarian contingency planners (experience, training, knowledge about operations)?
10. How can we make inter-agency contingency planning and preparedness more effective in any other ways?



PART II: SYNTHESIS OF THE DISCUSSIONS

This section attempts to summarize key elements of the discussions grouped by theme that occurred over the course of the two and a half day consultation. While it is not possible to capture all of the rich detail offered by participants, every effort has been made to synthesize and bring together the range of experiences and views, both as a record of the consultation and as a basis for future action.

1. The Right Goals and Focus in Contingency Planning

The underlying assumption of the consultation, reaffirmed by participants, was that if preparedness and contingency planning are effectively executed they are instrumental in ensuring appropriate readiness and response by agencies and country teams to humanitarian needs in emergency situations. Participants cited numerous examples of how preparedness and contingency planning contributed to capacity building and better response in emergencies - the sub-regional inter-agency contingency planning processes for 'Cote d'Ivoire plus 5' in 2006 was repeatedly cited as one such positive example. However, participants also noted that not all contingency planning leads to effective preparedness.

Participants highlighted that some agencies/organizations and country teams undertake contingency planning merely as a bureaucratic requirement, to produce a plan, rather than as a process to initiate change. What is the desired outcome of contingency planning—is it a plan or enhanced capacity? Should inter-agency contingency planning aim to produce highly specific plans that can act as manuals during an emergency, or is it more useful to produce a strategic framework for collective action?

Questions about how to determine when a country team is 'prepared' were also raised. How can contingency planning be moved beyond the obvious issues of staffing, supplies, and resources to also address higher-level organizational issues that often hamper effective response? The challenges of determining whether contingency planning is generating appropriate preparedness levels were also raised. This was found to be particularly difficult when addressing threats of different scales and considering emergencies which are imminent and those that are likely to develop in a longer timeframe. Questions were raised as to whether contingency planning is generating preparedness for the right scale of emergency – should it focus on small more frequent emergencies, or large, catastrophic emergencies?

Participants noted the challenge posed by the rapid turn-over of staff in agencies, and by the increasing number of actors, many of

them outside the IASC framework, that seek to play a role in humanitarian response.

Participants strongly reaffirmed that contingency planning is best conceived as a process of change, not just the production of a document. The primary concern should be on how to improve the appropriateness and quality of humanitarian action. Preparedness and contingency planning constitute tools and processes for addressing anticipated problems, defining roles, maintaining and improving coordination, and generating appropriate plans of action. It was further suggested that contingency planning should be used to build capacities of participating institutions and their partners, and should lead to sustainable processes. As a change process, it was suggested that contingency planning should be expected to generate debate and discussion. A contingency planning process that generates no debate or argument is probably one that is not stimulating change.

A contingency planning process that generates no debate or argument is probably one that is not stimulating change.

No contingency plan has been successful that was not "owned."

Participants suggested the following essential elements when considering the goals and focus of contingency planning:

- Encourage understanding of preparedness and contingency planning as tools and processes for change – helping to define needs, address potential problems, clarify roles, improve coordination, and generate practical action, not simply as the production of a document or plan.
- Give greater attention to using the process of contingency planning to enhance the quality of humanitarian assistance.
- Include in contingency planning a focus on building capacities of participating institutions and partners and sustainable processes.

2. Improving the Consistency of Preparedness and Contingency Planning

Several participants highlighted instances in which agencies/organizations and country teams are not prepared to respond to emergencies even in the face of acute threat, or where there was resistance to undertake contingency planning even when support was being offered. In general, it was felt that one of the significant factors that lead to a lack of consistent, reliable

preparedness and contingency planning was the ambiguity surrounding who was accountable for initiating (or triggering) preparedness actions and contingency planning and ensuring that these processes are followed. Challenges faced in effectively integrating preparedness and contingency planning into ongoing programme planning and coordination structures, and the lack of mechanisms for quality assurance of preparedness and contingency planning were also cited as impediments to ensuring a consistent approach.

Participants reaffirmed that preparedness and contingency planning are shared functions for which all actors hold some responsibility. If an agency anticipates that it will undertake specific actions in an emergency, it must be adequately prepared to take those actions while ensuring coherence and coordination with the actions of others. Thus preparedness at the agency and inter-agency levels are essential. At the country level, the central role of the Resident or Humanitarian Coordinator in providing appropriate leadership for inter-agency preparedness and contingency planning was widely accepted, but commitment to the process was required by all members of the country team.

Participants considered how accountabilities for preparedness and contingency planning might be enhanced and what actions could be taken if country teams and their leadership fail to initiate or follow through with the required actions. The issue of how and when to trigger contingency planning in 'slow-onset' or gradually evolving disasters was highlighted as a challenge. The lack of alignment of different agencies' regional offices and coverage was also highlighted as an issue that sometimes challenged providing structured inter-agency support to specific countries.

The following suggestions were offered by participants as potential actions to improve the consistency of preparedness and contingency planning:

- Encourage establishment of permanent 'preparedness and contingency planning task forces' of senior programme level staff from agencies within all country teams.
- Further institutionalize preparedness and contingency planning through system-wide advocacy and training; issuance of a high-level directive, perhaps from the IASC principals, on the need for regular preparedness and contingency planning was suggested.
- Strengthen accountabilities for preparedness and contingency planning by clarifying accountabilities of agencies, country teams as well as headquarter and regional supportive structures; include accountabilities for preparedness and

contingency planning in staff terms of reference and performance appraisal forms; reaffirm Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator accountabilities for preparedness and contingency planning as well as those of the members of the country team.

- Strengthen oversight and quality assurance of inter-agency preparedness and contingency planning efforts. Suggestions included the establishment of a 'peer review network'; a 'preparedness audit' to assess strengths and identify gaps; encourage more robust self-assessment; encourage all country teams to undertake simulations/exercises.
- Develop further guidance and training tools to support agency and country efforts in preparedness and contingency planning; highlighted as a priority.

3. Improving Contingency Planning Processes

As outlined in the opening presentation, the improvement of the quality of contingency planning processes was a significant theme of the consultation. In the best cases, contingency planning processes resulted in agencies/organizations striving to anticipate needs, considering scale and planning figures, solving problems, adjusting capacities, clarifying roles and responsibilities and determining next steps in processes that were fully 'owned' and driven by participants themselves. In less than optimal situations, the process of planning does not lead to commitments and action.

While special contingency planning processes will commonly be required, many participants asserted that contingency planning should be integrated into on-going programme planning processes, rather than be only parallel activities or singular exercises, e.g. a part of Common Country Assessment-UN Development Assessment Framework, Common Assessment Process and other processes. Equally, contingency planning ought to be linked to early warning and assessment systems, along with other organizational and management processes. Participants repeatedly suggested that contingency planning should be a continuing process of improvement in which lessons from previous crises are incorporated, and contingency plans should be upgraded after emergencies to incorporate lessons drawn analysis of experience.

Most participants agreed that contingency planning and response capacities would be improved by increased the use of training, exercises and simulations to develop and test capacities. A coordinated process of assessment, planning, training and simulation has been found to be especially helpful and mutually

reinforcing. Training in contingency planning was seen as one of the few types of capacity building that actually helps staff members see how the wider systems work and how the contributions of each of the agencies/organization come together. It was suggested that contingency planning should help country teams increase their awareness of, access to, and use of existing tools, e.g. best practices, templates, sample projects, multi-sectoral rapid assessment forms, agency specific toolkits, UNITRACK supply management package, etc. The development of an inter-agency contingency planning tool kit was seen as a practical way to assemble and disseminate these various tools.

The lack of involvement of key humanitarian players in some contingency planning processes was seen as a critical weakness. It was suggested that UN Country Teams need to engage more systematically with the Red Cross/Crescent Movement and NGOs. It was also felt that there was a need to engage more systematically with those responsible for staff security, such as UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) or NGO security advisors, as well as Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Political Affairs (DPA), which have tended to fall outside of contingency planning processes but may have significant expertise to offer.

To improve the quality of contingency planning processes, participants offered the following suggestions:

- Integrate contingency planning into on-going planning processes, e.g. Common Country Assessment-UN Development Assistance Framework (CCA-UNDAFs) and Common Assessment Processes (CAPs).
- Develop enhanced toolkits to support contingency planning training and simulation, ensuring availability of information about existing tools.
- Develop a checklist of actions that country teams are recommended to do in preparation for a contingency planning exercise.

4. Facilitation and Support for Inter-Agency Contingency Planning

Effective facilitation and support were recognized as key elements in ensuring positive outcomes of inter-agency contingency planning processes. At present there are a range of approaches used to provide support. Some of these approaches have proved less than optimal.

Outside facilitators sometimes develop contingency plans without significant participation of agencies and organizations. This may lead to the production of plans that lack significant understanding and ownership by those that will be responsible for implementing preparedness actions and mounting a response. Contingency planning efforts facilitated by a single agency/organization may reflect a narrow agency/organization-specific focus rather than broader perspectives. Outside facilitators may offer guidance without a deep understanding of the international humanitarian system or the specific challenges facing country teams in specific contexts, resulting in superficial planning that does not sufficiently address the challenges that will be encountered in mounting response to an emergency. Finally as more organizations become involved in the contingency planning process facilitators may have to deal with competing and uncoordinated approaches.

Participants at the consultation debated a range of questions with regards to which method of facilitation best engenders ownership and commitment to the contingency planning process. Is facilitation best done by outside consultants, a single agency, a body such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), or a multi-agency approach? Does facilitation simply involve organizing the planning and completing a report, or does it include providing leadership or technical guidance in helping agencies and country teams identify problems and find solutions? Does the facilitator need knowledge and experience in managing and planning meetings or should she/he have more in-depth understanding of humanitarian operations and agencies?

Participants emphasized that effective facilitation of contingency planning at the country level requires a combination of appropriate preconditions, effective leadership, a minimum set of skills for lead planners and facilitators, as well as supportive mechanisms at the regional and global level. Discussion focussed on identifying the key elements of each of these aspects.

While the impetus for contingency planning may come from a range of actors in the system – for example, by the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and country team, regional bodies, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the need for a coordinated system to guide and ensure coherence is increasingly critical. Participants reaffirmed that for the process to be effective, contingency planning must be led by senior managers and decision-makers. Without their active participation, planning typically has limited consequence. At the country level, the importance of leadership from the

Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, working closely with the country team, was seen as crucial to the success of inter-agency preparedness and contingency planning.

Clarification of terminology was recognised as reflecting important concepts. It was suggested that 'contingency planners' should be considered in-country staff of various agencies that hold responsibility for undertaking the planning process; those providing expert support might be labelled 'contingency planning facilitators'. This understanding emphasizes that the planning should be undertaken by those in-country, and that the role of outside expertise should be to facilitate and support, not replace the role of the planners themselves.

Participants reaffirmed that outcomes of a planning process were more likely to be substantive and 'owned' by the country team where support was provided by facilitators from several agencies/organizations working together, rather than the support being provided by one-person missions or a single agency/organization. This multi-agency approach, participants recommended the establishment of an inter-agency roster to create a pool of qualified contingency planning facilitators that could be called upon when requests for support were received.

At present staff based at the regional level, working together as inter-agency support groups, are considered important front-line support systems to country teams. These regional inter-agency bodies can be particularly helpful in facilitating contingency planning processes, supporting the development of strategies and tools, helping to arrange technical support, and organizing multi-country planning. Further potential roles for inter-agency collaboration at the regional level includes monitoring indicators of slow-onset emergencies (e.g., nutritional crises), institutionalizing oversight and quality control of contingency plans, and establishing standard protocols for monitoring of contingency planning. The role of external facilitators was seen to be particularly important in efforts to overcome local constraints, e.g. complexities in contingency planning, a stymied country team, a hesitant Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, a lack of recognition of imminent emergency, or difficult inter-agency relationships in-country. Participants asserted, however, that where external facilitation was justified it should aim to build local capacities in contingency planning and to create sustainable systems.

Support from the regional level remains complicated however by the fact that many of these inter-agency groups are essentially informal, some do not include key agencies, and the lack of alignment between the coverage of some regional offices means

that among agencies there are different relationships between regional operations and country offices.

Preparedness and contingency planning are not simply country-team level issues; they are important to all organizations at all levels. For this reason preparedness and contingency planning are accountabilities that require appropriate collaboration and support from the global/headquarters level as well as regional and national levels. The value of global level support for preparedness and contingency planning was affirmed particularly in making the system more responsive. Important contributions for the global/headquarter level include support for strategic initiatives, building capacities and supporting regional efforts, helping deal with politically sensitive and inter-regional situations, and those contexts in which broad cross-cutting issues come into play (e.g., climate change, migration, globalization, etc.) or where headquarters-level guidance, human resources and funding may be required.

Proposals to enhance the facilitation and support of contingency planning included the following:

- Adopt the terminology of 'contingency planners' as referring to agencies and staff in-country, and 'contingency planning facilitators' as the external technical support provided to country teams.
- Encourage multi-agency technical support to inter-agency contingency planning initiatives, rather than the support being provided by a single agency or body.
- Develop standard operating procedures on how a Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator and country team can request preparedness and contingency planning support.
- Strengthen capacities to provide contingency planning support to country offices by establishing rosters of contingency planning facilitators at regional and global levels.
- Recognize, support and enhance regional inter-agency working groups dedicated to supporting country team preparedness and contingency planning efforts.
- Provide greater clarity on the role of global inter-agency support structures for preparedness and contingency planning.

5. Qualifications for Humanitarian Contingency Planners

Throughout the discussions, the complexities and challenges of the contingency planning process were highlighted as well as the range of skills required to effectively lead, manage and facilitate them. This raised the question of whether there should be a minimum level of skill, experience, and training required for contingency planners and facilitators. In some cases contingency planning facilitators from agencies/organizations have extensive experience and expertise in humanitarian planning and operations, while in other cases persons acting as contingency planners/facilitators have little practical experience or understanding of the agencies they are helping to prepare. In this regard, the need to work toward the 'professionalization' of staff engaged in contingency planning was considered.

In general, it was agreed that to facilitate and support the serious work of preparedness and contingency planning, planners/facilitators needed broad experience and expertise. While no attempt was made to set specific minimum qualifications, the following suggestions were made: solid field experience in humanitarian operations with knowledge of challenges commonly encountered, knowledge of the humanitarian system (including the UN, NGOs, governments and other organisations and agencies), familiarity with the region/country, knowledge of humanitarian reform, ability to facilitate and negotiate, ability to lead strategic planning, technical knowledge of key areas, and the credibility to work with senior staff. It was also recognized that it was necessary to put in place a dedicated approach to finding the right people and to support them to achieve the desired competency levels, through experience, training, guidance and tools.

With regard to qualifications for humanitarian contingency planners/facilitators, participants suggested the following:

- Establish norms or suggested minimum qualifications for contingency planners/facilitators supported by efforts to help identify the appropriate persons and help candidates reach the desired competencies.

6. The Form and Content of Contingency Plans

The issue of form and content of contingency plans elicited considerable discussion. A review of inter-agency contingency plans confirms a wide range of practice, from contingency plans that are composed of a short list of supply items, to others which focus almost exclusively on descriptions of potential threats, to still others which attempt to define all details and run more than 100

pages. Should contingency plans focus only on a single emergency, or attempt to plan for multiple threats? Should contingency plans be detailed operational plans or general planning frameworks? While brevity is commonly called for, what essential information must be included?

Participants noted that the right level of detail in contingency planning is critical. Too often, it was argued, we over-plan. A 'lighter' planning process using simple tools are often important in overcoming resistance to contingency planning by those that perceive the process to be burdensome. However, it was noted that shorter and quicker planning may not bring about the management changes and development of the capacities required. Participants agreed that it was important to avoid the 'consolidation trap' in which everything is loaded into the contingency plan.

While there was not agreement on the level detail that should be included in contingency plans, largely because of the range of contexts in which planning is undertaken, it was suggested that that the level of detail in contingency planning should correspond to the purpose of the planning - detailed scenario-based planning is not constructive when broad general preparedness is needed, nor is it sufficient to do only broad general preparedness in the face of a particular acute threat. While scenario building can be useful in considering potential developments, it was felt by some that we must move beyond the simplistic use of scenarios, and find ways to more effectively use such projections. In terms of format, participants recommended the elaboration of a short summary document and a checklist for ease of use. Integrating checklists into the plan was seen as a way to facilitate the implementation of preparedness actions.

"Too often, we over-plan... however, 'shorter and quicker' may not bring about the changes and capacities required."

Effective inter-agency contingency plans will be rooted both in the assessment of humanitarian needs and agencies/organizations' response capacities. It was considered important focus contingency planning on ways to meet the 'gaps' between the anticipated needs and capacities to respond, rather than basing plans exclusively on the current capacities of responding agencies/organizations. Factors critical to successful contingency plans include: a) keeping plans focused on the humanitarian impacts or consequences, b) building in benchmarks for the lead-time needed to gear up and c) plans for coordination among actors.

Several suggestions were provided to achieve the right content in contingency plans. The contingency planning group in-country

should agree upon the general risk profile; the likely scenario(s); a set of baseline data on vulnerable populations including potential caseload numbers, planning figures, vulnerability criteria, likely sites for locating any new sub-offices; the composition of a rapid assessment team as well as the assessment methodology and tools. At the cluster or sectoral level, agreement should be reached about the technical details of the plan and how to activate each agency/organization's resources. The key challenge lies in forging a consensus on planning figures and establishing the appropriate 'level of preparedness' for the agencies/organizations involved in the planning process.

The following suggestions were offered by participants with regard to form and content of contingency plans:

- Encourage contingency planning with consideration of generic preparedness for multiple hazards, rather than separate plans for each hazard.
- Agree on the level of detail needed in planning. In general, keep inter-agency contingency plans at a strategic level. Avoiding 'over-planning' or dumping all details into the plan.
- Keep contingency plans as simple and brief as possible, but determine level of detail required to achieve the implementation of the required preparedness actions, response capacities and to resolve anticipated problems.
- Define as an essential aspect of contingency planning an agreed 'level of preparedness' for agencies/organizations and the country team, which can be adjusted as threat levels vary.

7. The Linkage between Planning and Emergency Response

An experience that was repeatedly cited was that contingency plans are developed but the required preparedness actions are not undertaken. In some instances preparations are completed and an emergency situation develops but the activation of emergency response systems is delayed or not undertaken at all. This led to questions of how to better ensure that agencies and country teams operationalize preparedness planning. How does one measure the effectiveness of 'preparedness' in any quantifiable fashion? What mechanisms or systems might ensure a more dependable trigger of emergency response? How does one mobilize funding for preparedness for future contingencies when current emergencies often are under-funded?

Inter-agency contingency planning by definition brings together agencies/organizations with different mandates, systems and scales of operation. While agencies are often committed to 'acting as one', contingency planning in the lead-up to a humanitarian response must be able to bridge many differences, including establishing levels of preparedness, the ability to effectively scale-up with regards to supplies and human resources and the resources available to undertake these actions. Moving from contingency planning to effective preparedness and response is fundamentally dependant on effective decision-making processes. To improve the link between early warning, planning and action, one must give priority to the analysis of how collective decisions are made. This highlights again the importance of leadership. As suggested by one participant, "even the best systems live or die on the basis of leadership and coordination."

"The process of decision-making is a critical link between planning and action"

"Even the best systems live or die on the basis of leadership and coordination."

Participants recognized the importance of funding for preparedness as a key element to operationalizing a contingency plan. In general, resources to support preparedness are more difficult to secure than resources to fund emergency response. However, shortage of funds alone does not explain the lack of preparedness as many of the required actions can be undertaken with very limited funds. Participants suggested ways in which greater resource mobilization for preparedness might be encouraged, including advocacy with donors, joint fundraising with the support of the regional inter-agency mechanisms, inclusion of preparedness and contingency planning activities in regional Consolidated Appeal Processes (CAPs), and advocacy for Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funds to be made available for preparedness and contingency planning.

The challenge of establishing appropriate triggers for activating contingency plans was a third issue discussed by participants. Identifying appropriate triggers, particularly in 'slow-onset' emergencies where slowly deteriorating humanitarian situations make thresholds hard to establish and to respect was difficult. Emergencies situations are by definition volatile; changing conditions mean that triggers often become moving targets. Active and regular risk monitoring, linking agency/organization-specific early warning systems with the inter-agency contingency process, was suggested as a means of ensuring that early warning translates into early action. At the global and regional levels, the use of inter-

agency early warning tools, such as the IASC Early Warning – Early Action report, was recognized as a way to stimulate preparedness actions and trigger the activation of response systems.

In considering ways to strengthen the linkage between planning and action, the following suggestions were offered by participants:

- Assess the decision-making systems and make recommendations for strengthening the linkage between information and action in preparedness and contingency planning.
- Do not use lack of funds as an excuse for not doing preparedness and contingency planning.
- Encourage greater allocation and prioritization of resources for preparedness and contingency planning.
- Find improved mechanisms for ‘triggering’ contingency planning and preparedness, including use of such tools as the IASC Early Warning –Early Action report.

8. Linkages with National Governments

The critical importance of appropriate collaboration with national governments in inter-agency contingency planning was reaffirmed by many participants. It was recognized, however, that inter-agency contingency planning can be implemented as an internal process of the country team, fully justified so as to ensure coordinated support of national efforts. At another level, inter-agency contingency planning must be carried out in appropriate collaboration with national authorities and systems. Finding the right balance between the internal and external elements of these processes is part of the challenge in inter-agency contingency planning. Experience confirms that joint planning with governments can be complicated in situations where the government and/or local communities may be parties to a conflict and where humanitarian space may be compromised and the humanitarian imperative contested. It may also prove challenging in situations in which the government has minimal capacities or interests in responding to humanitarian needs. While recognizing these exceptions, participants emphasized the dangers of insufficient consideration and support of national frameworks and efforts, and re-iterated the importance of appropriate engagement and collaboration with national emergency systems.

Suggestion by participants:

- Ensure that the establishment of appropriate linkages with national systems are always a critical component of the inter-agency contingency planning processes.

9. Humanitarian Reform and the Cluster Approach

The implementation of the humanitarian reform agenda, and the roll-out of the cluster approach in particular, have significant implications for inter-agency contingency planning. Both these processes seek to ensure greater predictability, accountability and partnership in humanitarian action, and can act as mutually reinforcing processes. The cluster approach provides an opportunity for strengthened leadership and partnership, necessary both for effective contingency planning and emergency response. Contingency planning, in turn, enables early problem solving by clarifying coordination arrangements, creating sector/cluster groups, and identifying sector/cluster leadership responsibilities ahead of an emergency.

Many of the challenges encountered in the early implementation of the cluster approach were raised and discussed. Critical issues identified were: the confusion surrounding the triggers for 'activating' the cluster approach; the lack of understanding of many at country level of the fundamental components of the cluster approach; the challenge of identifying participants for contingency planning that are reflective of the broad humanitarian partnership yet still constitute a workable size for planning; and the responsibility of the global cluster lead organization in contingency planning when the organization is not present in country prior to the onset of an emergency.

Despite these challenges, there was general agreement on the importance of the cluster approach and the opportunity it provides for enhancing contingency planning processes. This will require that the cluster approach is consistently integrated into contingency planning mechanisms and is well understood by staff involved with contingency planning at all levels, including Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator and country teams. To achieve such an understanding and ensure that the cluster approach is appropriately integrated in contingency planning, it is critical that facilitators of contingency planning, Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and country teams are provided the necessary training, likely requiring both specialized training as well as integration into existing training packages.

The following key suggestions were offered by participants:

- See the contingency planning process as a means to putting in place appropriate cluster coordination arrangements prior to emergencies.
- Ensure that country teams have training on the cluster approach prior to their undertaking inter-agency contingency planning exercises that will integrate the cluster approach.
- Ensure that contingency planning facilitators are fully conversant with the general principles of the cluster approach as well as the latest operational guidance.

10. Revision of the IASC Contingency Planning Guidelines

The existing guidelines on inter-agency contingency planning were developed in 2001 by the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning and were formally adopted as the UN standard in 2002. Since that time the humanitarian context has continued to evolve, a wealth of experience has been gained by agencies around the world and the process of humanitarian reform has been initiated. As a result, the guidelines are currently under review, with the consultation providing a valuable opportunity for participants to discuss the first draft of the revised guidelines.

There was discussion of whether the guidelines should focus narrowly on scenario-based contingency planning or whether they should also provide guidance on broader emergency preparedness planning. It was argued that providing basic guidance on both approaches and when they should be employed would provide humanitarian country teams with a choice of which approach to employ in the specific country context. It was also suggested that the guidelines provide more differentiation with regards to contingency planning approaches for natural disaster and complex emergencies. Specific guidance on phased contingency planning for slow onset disasters was also recommended.

It was suggested that the basic principles of humanitarian reform and an emphasis on raising the standards of humanitarian response to provide better outcomes for those affected by conflict or natural disasters should be presented more prominently in the guidelines. While the guidelines do emphasize the importance of commitment of senior managers as critical to the success of the inter-agency contingency planning process, it was suggested that this issue be given more prominence. In the same vein, inter-agency contingency planning should be reflected as a responsibility of each

member of the humanitarian country team undertaken with the leadership of the Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator.

The guidelines should reflect a greater emphasis on the consequences of hazards for communities and the importance of a nuanced social analysis, including gender analysis, as the basis for planning. Advice on community participation and validation of the contingency planning process should also be included. To highlight the importance of inter-agency contingency planning in countries with a development focus, it was suggested that the preface to the guidelines should emphasize good preparedness and timely emergency response as critical to enabling countries undertake early recovery and return to a development focus after emergencies.

Participants suggested that more detail be provided on how to manage and document the contingency planning process, working with national authorities, and how to design an inter-agency contingency planning process that is inclusive of all humanitarian partners. Consistent reference to 'humanitarian country teams' was felt to be more inclusive than 'IASC country teams'. As suggested, references to Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will be replaced with reference to the Red Cross Movement.

It was felt that more emphasis should be given to clearly designating triggers in the process of scenario development. It was also suggested that additional guidance could be provided on different types of planning and preparedness actions required for emergencies of different scale. Clearer linkages with existing IASC tools and processes (Consolidated Appeal/Flash Appeal, IASC Early Warning/Early Action report) were also recommended.

There was significant support for the development of a toolbox to accompany the revised guidelines. The utility of checklists and templates were emphasized. Specific tools/annexes on working with the military were also recommended.

The inter-agency drafting group will consider the comments received and a revised draft will be submitted to the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning for finalization before submission to the IASC Working Group for endorsement in November 2007. Discussions are ongoing to field-test the guidelines during inter-agency contingency planning processes in September of 2007.

11. Potential New Tools related to Early Warning, Preparedness and Contingency Planning

In recognition that many agencies have developed new tools to support their internal early warning, preparedness and contingency planning processes, participants were invited to present these tools to all those present at the consultation. The WFP described their EPass electronic system, and encouraged participants to use the HEWSweb system as an inter-agency platform. UNICEF demonstrated its internal global early warning system as a possible model for others and discussed the likely evolution of this system to a more comprehensive emergency management system. The WFP Country Director from El Salvador presented the inter-agency contingency planning system being developed by the Country Team, which was viewed as a potential model for possible adoption by other country teams. UNICEF presented the ways in which GoogleEarth was currently being used within the organization and described its potential as a common inter-agency platform on which shared information might be layered. The potential contribution of the new technology focused NGO – the International Networked System for Total Early Disease and Disaster Detection (INSTEDD) - was discussed. Systems being offered by others were mentioned.

Suggestions offered by participants include the following:

- Undertake an inter-agency assessment and establish agreement on the use of new common information platforms, like GoogleEarth, to facilitate enhanced planning.
- Further investigation and assessment of the inter-agency contingency planning system being developed by the country team in El Salvador to determine its potential adoption as a model.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The 1st Global Consultation of Contingency Planners provided a valuable initial opportunity for practitioners from a wide range of humanitarian organisations to meet, exchange information, consider best practices and lessons learned, and discuss particular issues of interest. Participants were invited to comment on the potential usefulness of continued professional engagement and information sharing in order to further professionalize the field of contingency planning.

Participants affirmed the usefulness of continued networking and offered the following suggestions:

- Consider the establishment of an 'association of humanitarian contingency planners' as a forum for continued interaction and building of a professional cadre of humanitarian contingency planners.
- Consider the establishment of a 'community of practice' supported by a website and e-forum for sharing best practices, posting problems and furthering discussions.
- Give priority to the creation of more common tools, affirmed throughout the consultation.

Every effort was made to capture all ideas, suggestions and recommendations. Contingency Planners, contingency planning facilitators, agencies, country teams and other are encouraged to draw on and use the rich offerings provided herein to the benefit of more effective humanitarian assistance. Also, the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning agreed at the meeting to review the suggestions put forward and, where required, propose or initiate processes to move forward on key recommendations. This report is also submitted to the IASC Working Group.

ANNEX I: QUICK WINS

	Quick Wins - Consultation Exercise	Responsible (SWG to define)
	Initial suggestions by participants as to action that could be taken to enhance effectiveness of contingency planning	
Country/ Regional Coordination	▪ Active participation of Regional Offices covering South Asia but not based in Bangkok into OCHA led coordination forum.	
	▪ Early Warning to be a standing item on Regional Directors' "Emergency" Team	
	▪ Enhance inter-organizational coordination at regional level to support country level IA preparedness & contingency planning process.	
	▪ Help UN/NGOs to define coordination mechanisms at technical level.	
Accountability Evaluations	▪ Ensure that relevant job descriptions include responsibility for preparedness planning.	
	▪ Enforce protocol that each UNCT undertakes/reviews CP process at least once a year.	
	▪ Ensure TORs for HC/RC cover requirement to manage inter-agency aspects of preparedness. Ensure that annual evaluation assesses compliance.	
	▪ Build CP into PER of RC/HC and each agency's Country Rep.	
	▪ Undertake an evaluation of an inter-agency CP post-emergency.	
Partnerships and Participation	▪ Include input from field staff and partners in CP process.	
	▪ Establish structured dialogue with UNDSS and other security players to ensure due consideration of operational implications.	
	▪ CP to be owned by the country team (UN + NGOs) on the basis of a joint assessment.	
	▪ A more transparent planning process → greater ownership of plan	
	▪ UN, Red Cross/Crescent, NGOs as equal partners when doing contingency planning (CP contingent on full IASC + participation)	
	▪ Open access to joint contingency planning mechanisms and plans to interested parties.	
Triggers	▪ Systematic linkage between early warning/triggers & contingency planning process/plans.	
Capacity Building	▪ Capacity building of CP front runners on IASC CT level	
	▪ Capacity building for contingency planners.	
	▪ Integrate CAP workshop, develop IASC CP workshop modules.	
	▪ Develop training package on CP for country teams.	
	▪ Capacity assessment of implementing partners and capacity building support.	
	▪ Create critical mass at country level in CP.	
Tools	▪ Prepare checklists and SOPs for practical actions to be taken to operationalize the CP in the first days of emergency.	
	▪ Practical (web based?) tools to facilitate recording and maintaining inter-agency CP by multiple partners.	
	▪ Challenge IACP through simulation exercises.	
	▪ Regular inter-agency simulation exercise.	
Roster	▪ For facilitating CP workshops, always try to have three or four facilitators from different agencies, helps buy-in to the process.	
	▪ Create a pool of regional global support (rosters, trained CPs) for IACP.	
	▪ Set-up inter-agency roster of experienced planners to help country teams prepare CP.	
Monitoring	▪ Communication forum or mechanism for what NGO's are doing in an area.	
	▪ Establish basic monitoring system for country CP status.	
	▪ Document best practices	
	▪ Institute a self-assessment after each crisis: Did CP work? Was it used? –yes –no	
	▪ Analysis requests by the humanitarian community regarding contingency planning. i.e. UN system, Red Cross and Crescent community, International NGOs, local NGOs.	
	▪ Map various approaches to risk management/assessment, the elements they cover and how the output feeds into the decision cycle. Harmonize risk management methodology.	
Funding Issues	▪ Develop compelling justification for donors to invest in CP and preparedness.	
	▪ In CAP countries, link CP to CAP	
	▪ Clarify criteria/ procedures for how country teams/agencies can access the CERF for funding of CP and preparedness measures.	

ANNEX 1I: AGENDA

	Monday 2 July	Tuesday 3 July	Wednesday 4 July
09:00 – 11:00	Opening and overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening and introduction of participants Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of contingency planning (Richard Choularton) Statement from OCHA Concepts, practices & challenges (Everett Ressler) <p>Facilitator: Everett Ressler (UNICEF)</p>	Humanitarian Reform: Implications for contingency planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel discussion <p>Panel: Jamie McGoldrick (OCHA), Niels Scott (IFRC), Daniel Endres (UNHCR) Facilitator: Megan Gilgan (UNICEF)</p>	Standards / Training / Guidance for Contingency Planners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem statement Discussion and decision on follow-up <p>Facilitator: Flemming Nielsen (IFRC)</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee</i>
11:30 – 12:00	Discussion of opening presentations (cont.)	Strengthening regional and HQ support for inter-agency contingency planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic introduction Plenary / group discussion 	Wrap up and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Summary statement
12:00 – 13:00	Quick wins – Suggestions for practical actions that can easily be taken to make contingency planning more effective. <p>Facilitator: Carsten Voelz (CARE) and Fred Spielberg (UNICEF)</p>	<p>Facilitator: Flemming Nielsen (IFRC)</p>	<p>Facilitator: Everett Ressler (UNICEF)</p>
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>END</i>
14:00 – 16:00	Experiences and Lessons Learned <p>Panel 1: <u>West Africa & global perspectives</u>: Tanya Chapuisat (UNICEF), Herve Ludovic de Lys (OCHA), Kalula Kalambay (WHO)</p> <p>Panel 2: <u>Middle East/North Africa & global perspectives</u>: Michael Paratharayil (Christian Aid), Carsten Voelz (CARE), Thomas Davin (UNICEF)</p> <p>Panel 3: <u>Central/Eastern Europe, CIS & global perspectives</u>: Maria Olga Gonzales (UNDP), Angela Raven Roberts (UNICEF)</p> <p>Panel 4: <u>South and East Africa & global perspectives</u>: Henri Josserand (FAO), Gabriella Waaijman (OCHA), Regis Chapman (WFP)</p> <p>Facilitator: Rasmus Egendal (WFP)</p>	Moving from contingency planning to response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic introduction Plenary / group discussion <p>Facilitators: Julia Schivelman-Watt (UNHCR) & Fred Spielberg (UNICEF)</p>	
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	
16:30 – 18:30	Experiences and Lessons Learned (cont.) <p>Panel 5: <u>Asia & global perspectives</u>: Rasmus Egendal (WFP), Terje Skavdal (OCHA), Adriana Zarrelli (UNICEF)</p> <p>Panel 6: <u>Global perspectives</u>: Daniel Endres (UNHCR), Peter Scott Bowden (WFP), Besida Tonwe (OCHA)</p> <p>Panel 7: <u>Global perspectives</u>: Bart Deemer (USAID), David Carden (OCHA), Niels Scott (IFRC)</p> <p>Facilitator: Carlo Scaramella (WFP)</p>	Presentation and feedback on the draft IASC Contingency Planning Guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Group discussion <p>Presenter/facilitator: Megan Gilgan and Rasmus Egendal (IASC SWG Drafting Group)</p>	<p>Taxi: 022 320 22 02 or 022 331 41 33</p> <p>Conference secretariat: Louise Gentzel: 0788231044</p> <p>Travel: American Express: 022 919 90 45 Claire Morton, UNICEF: 022 909 56 53</p>
18:30	Welcome reception: Discussion, drink and food	Optional session on new tools Facilitator: Dusan Zupka (OCHA) & Everett Ressler (UNICEF)	

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